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NOTES FROM THE MEDICAL PRESS



IN CHARGE OF

ELISABETH ROBINSON SCOVIL

SALVARSAN IN SCARLET FEVER.—*The Interstate Medical Journal* reports the treatment of scarlet fever by intravenous injections of salvarsan. A rapid termination of the disease took place. The membrane disappeared from the tonsils and the temperature dropped. The severest cases did not yield to the treatment but all others were favorably modified.

SOME IMPROVISED HELPS.—*The Journal of the American Medical Association*, quoting from a German contemporary, calls attention to the coffee pot as useful for an improvised inhaler, the spout being put in the patient's mouth. A stout linen bag holding two pounds of oats, or bran, heated in the oven, can be used instead of a hot-water bag. A patient suffering from a boil in the axilla, or on the arm, or from a felon, can have the arm comfortably supported by placing a board under the arm, the end nearest the axilla resting on the bed, the other held up at an angle of 45 degrees by a rope fastened to a nail in the wall at the head of the bed.

EXTERNAL LOCAL HEAT IN INFANT'S DISEASES.—The same journal records the recommendation of an Italian physician of the use of hot compresses to the chest and abdomen in the treatment of infants. They aid in promoting and regulating the circulation, combating congestion and stimulating the internal organs. In gastro-intestinal disturbances, peritonitis and inflammation in the mesenteric glands hot applications are especially valuable.

TEETH AND THEIR RELATION TO THE BODY.—Dr. G. H. Wright, in the *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal*, states that four times in a child's life the tonsils become enlarged without infection or disease. These are when the first group of temporary molars appear, at about two years of age; at six years, when the first permanent molars erupt; at twelve years, when the second molars are active in eruption, and at eighteen years when the process is completed. District nurses and school nurses, amongst others, should learn the years when to expect these teeth and remember their influence on the tonsils, which seldom require treatment.

EARACHE.—Dr. G. L. Richards says, in *Merck's Archives*, that an earache is always important and should never be disregarded as a trivial thing to be treated with oils, poultices and various lotions.

PASTEURIZATION OF MILK CRITICIZED.—In the London letter of the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, Dr. Ralph Vincent, a pediatricist who has done a good deal of research work, seriously criticizes the sterilization or pasteurization of milk. He says these methods destroy the very germ, *streptococcus lacticus*, on which the wholesomeness of the milk depends, permitting other putrefactive germs full play, producing acute poisonous results in the bowel of the infant, especially in hot weather. Raw milk should be used, cooled in the refrigerator, immediately after milking, to 35° F. and sent out in vacuum bottles to the consumer, so that there may be no rise of temperature.

CIVIC NURSES.—In a paper read at the meeting of the National Conservation Congress, E. E. Rittenhouse, Conservation Commissioner of the Equitable Assurance Society, amongst numerous other suggestions for the benefit of the public health, recommends the employment of civic nurses in the health service, who may also act as health inspectors and aid in educational work.

AUTOINTOXICATION.—In a discussion at the meeting of the American Gastro-enterological Association, reported in the *Medical Record*, Dr. Max Einhorn said that the troubles of autointoxication had been greatly exalted by the profession. He had relieved the condition of some patients by relaxing their strict diet and allowing them to live like other people. He considered the whole idea of autointoxication as being still theoretical and not practical.

VACCINE THERAPY.—At the same congress Dr. J. B. Elliott, Jr., of New Orleans, said that last year he reported several cases of typhoid fever treated by vaccines. Since that time he had treated four cases in the same way with uniformly successful results. After three doses of vaccine there was usually a fall of the temperature to normal. He had seen no ill effect from the use of typhoid vaccine.

DISSEMINATION OF DIPHTHERIA BY THE FECES.—*The Medical Record*, quoting from a German contemporary, says that it has recently been stated that the urine in diphtheria usually contains virulent bacteria and should always be disinfected. The entrance of bacteria from the throat, etc., into the feces makes it imperative that these excreta should be disinfected as well. The same is true in leprosy.

CORRECT NOMENCLATURE.—In the course of a paper in the *New York Medical Journal* on the treatment of myalgia and arthritis, Dr. Brenneman says a muscular pain should be called a myalgia. If a joint is affected arthritis is the proper term to employ. The term rheumatism is redundant, unnecessary and unscientific.

DEFECTIVE EYES.—In a paper read before the Kansas Medical Society, Dr. J. R. Scott says that eye-strain is not a myth. Excessive contractions of the ciliary muscle require extra energy, children are often unable to expend this and organs remote from the eyes suffer, as well as the general nutrition. Myopia is an acquired defect, brought about by excessive use of the eyes. If the structures of the eye-ball do not give way under the continued tug of the ciliary muscle, the extra energy expended exhausts the individual, neurasthenic symptoms follow, sometimes through life, and decreased efficiency results. It is believed that the cataract of advanced years is the result of eye-strain in early life.

TINCTURE OF IODIN FOR BLISTERED FEET.—*The Military Surgeon* reports the treatment of blisters and abrasions of the feet with the official seven per cent. tincture of iodine. Where the blisters had not ruptured they were first painted and then incised by a sharp pointed, sterilized bistoury, care being taken to enter the blister under and beyond its raised surface. After expressing the serum the blister was re-painted. If the blister had already opened the iodine was applied in the same way. No dressing was used in the first case and the result was uniformly successful. When a raw surface, or ulceration rendered protection necessary, zinc oxide adhesive plaster was cut and fitted to the part, a pad being formed that would protect the sore from touching the shoe. Sometimes it was necessary to add a few folds of gauze, cutting them smaller than the plaster, so it would adhere to the sound skin.

GOOD HEALTH A BUSINESS PROPOSITION.—Under this heading the *Journal of the American Medical Association* presents some interesting statistics. Cancer destroys nearly 75,000 lives annually. Pneumonia is responsible for the loss of over 135,000 lives. Tuberculosis kills 150,000 annually and this is a preventable plague. Typhoid fever sweeps away 25,000 people and attacks 300,000, a preventable filth disease. Over 1,500,000 people are constantly ill from preventable disease. Over 6,000,000 persons will die from preventable causes in the next ten years.

In commenting on the work of Colonel Gorgas in Panama, it is asked if we know how to change the deadly swamps and jungles of Panama into healthful abodes for man; what excuse have we for not applying the same knowledge to American cities? Good health is a purchasable commodity and sickness can be insured against and prevented if the public is willing to pay enough for safeguards.